

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 06033 241608 Z

45

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 AF-10 IO-12 AID-20 ACDA-19

NEAE-00 CU-04 NIC-01 RSR-01 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

/169 W

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P R 241420 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2306

DIA WASHDC PRIRITY

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION UN

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6033

DEPT PASS CAIRO

EO 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PINT LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE INTERNAL SITUATION

1. AT EVENING MEETING MAY 23 COUNCIL OF MINISTERS DECIDED ABOLISH
STATE OF EMERGENCY BUT ARMY CONTINUES SHARE RESPONSIBILITY
FOR SECURITY WITH INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES. CHECK POINTS
CONTINUE TO BE MANNED IN BEIRUT AND ELSEWHERE, WITH CURFEW
APPARENTLY STABILIZED BETWEEN MIDNIGHT AND 0600 HOURS. SCHOOLS
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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 06033 241608 Z

REOPENED MAY 24 AND IT IS LIKELY THAT UNIVERSITIES WILL REOPEN MAY 28. ATMOSPHERE IN BEIRUT HAS RETURNED LONG WAY TOWARD NORMALCY AS MOVIES, NIGHT CLUBS, ETC. FUNCTIONING PRETTY MUCH AS BEFORE.

2. ALSO NORMAL IS IN- FIGHTING BETWEEN SUNNI MOSLEM AND LEFTIST POLITICAL CIRCLES AND GOVT, WITH SUNNIS MAKING USE OF FEDAYEEN- GOL CRISIS PLUS KARAME RESENTMENT OF AMIN EL HAFEZ TO DEMAND GREATER SHARE IN POWER. VARIOUS SUNNI GROUPS IN BEIRUT MET EVENING MAY 23 AND ISSUED STATEMENT CALLING ON PRIME MINISTER TO RESIGN AS WELL AS DEMANDING GREATER VOICE FOR ALL MOSLEMS. NEITHER SAEB SALAM NOR KARAME WERE PRESENT AND IT SEEMS LIKELY -- SOME OF WIND HAS BEEN TAKEN OUT OF SUNNI SAILS WITH ELIMINATION OF INCREASINGLY UNPOPULAR STATE OF EMERGENCY. HAFEZ WAS SADDLED WITH FACT THAT HE HAD SIGNED DECREE APPLYING IT AND HE ANNOUNCED ON TV EVENING MAY 23 THAT IT WAS LIFTED.

3. FEDAYEEN- GOL RELATIONS ARE ALSO RETURNING TO MORE NORMAL STATE WHILE WAR OF WILLS CONTINUES REAPPLICATION OF NEW ARRANGEMENTS. WE UNDERSTAND FROM ARMY THAT FIRST STEPS TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION BEGAN IN BEKAA AND ARKOUH ON MAY 23 AND THERE HAVE BEEN SOME ARRESTS OF FEDAYEEN WHO CARRYING ARMS IN PROHIBITED AREA (3. G., BEIRUT). AS BEST CAN ASCERTAIN NOTHING HAS YET BEEN TRIED WITH RESPECT TO IMPLEMENTATION IN CAMPS THEMSELVES, AND ARMY ADMITS THIS TO BE CASE. ARMY AWAITING DIRECTIVES AS TO TIMING FROM PRESIDENT AND IS KEEPING ALMOST ALL UNITS IN BEIRUT AREA (ALTHOUGH LESS VISIBLE TO PUOHIC). FEDAYEEN LEADERS PLEAD NEED FOR MORE TIME TO COOL PASSIONS WHILE AT SAME TIME TELLING THEIR PEOPLE THAT CAMPS WILL NOT BE DISARMED AND MISTAKES OF JORDAN IN 1970 WILL NOT BE REPEATED. THERE ARE ALSO REPORTS THAT ARMS HAVE BEEN REACHING CAMPS FROM SYRIA.

4. PRESIDENT FRANGIE SEEMS TO BE CONCENTRATING FOR IMMEDIATE ON RESTORING SENSE OF NORMALCY AND CONFIDENCE AMONG PEOPLE AND WITH STRENGTHENING PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET (WHO EXPECTED GO BEFORE ASSEMBLY FOR CONFIDENCE VOTE IN ABOUT TEN DAYS). FRANGIE MADE STATEMENT AT MEETING COUNCIL OF MINISTERS THAT " NO ONE IN LEBANON WISHES ANYTHING BAD TO HAPPEN TO OUR PALESTINIAN BROTHERS" AND THOSE WHO

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 06033 241608 Z

" SPEAK OF LIQUIDATION OF RESISTANCE" ARE ENGAGING IN DEMAGOGUERY. HE EXPRESSED REGRET FOR HUMAN AND MATERIAL LOSSES SUFFERED OVER " PAINFUL THREE WEEKS" AND EXPRESSED PLEASURE AT " MATURITY" AND " UNITY" OF LEBANESE PEOPLE. FINALLY PRESIDENT STRESSED NEED PROTECT LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY AND PRAISED ARMY.

HOUGHTON

NOTE BY OC/ T: NOT PASSED CAIRO.

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NMAFVVZCZ

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 MAY 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973BEIRUT06033
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: XGDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730555/aaaajudj.tel
Line Count: 119
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02-Jan-2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <11-Jan-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> mcm 980305
Subject: LEBANESE INTERNAL SITUATION
TAGS: PINT, LE, PINT
To: ABU DHABI
AMMAN
DHAHRAN
DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
JERUSALEM
JIDDA
KUWAIT

NEA

SECSTATE WASHDC

Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005